

EUR:FD Kohler:sj/np  
(Drafting Office and Officer).

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: September 15, 1956

SUBJECT:

NMD 901068  
AL-m) WTD 3/15/57

PARTICIPANTS: USSR

Premier Khrushchev  
Foreign Minister Gromyko  
Ambassador Menshikov  
Mr. Soldatov  
Mr. Troyanovsky

U.S.

The President  
The Vice President  
Secretary of State Herter  
Ambassador Cabot Lodge  
Ambassador Thompson  
Mr. Kohler  
Mr. Akalovsky

COPIES TO:

General Goodpastor  
The Vice President  
S/S  
G - Mr. Merchant

C - Mr. Reinhardt  
EUR - Mr. Kohler  
INR - Mr. Cummins  
Amb. Lodge - USUN

Ambassador  
Thompson,  
Moscow

Mr. Khrushchev and aides arrived promptly at 3:30 at the President's office. After initial greetings Mr. Khrushchev promptly handed the President a polished wooden ~~boxed containing a model of~~ the sphere incorporated in the Soviet moon-shot rocket Lunik II and of the pennants contained therein which are presumably now on the moon. Accompanying this was an embossed presentation folder. The President accepted the souvenir with interest and appreciation.

Following the ceremony the President opened the conversation by saying that in view of the limits of the time available today, it would probably be possible to do little more than to sketch out the general outlines of the discussions. He did not have any intention of curtailing the talks but thought it would be useful to hit on the subjects of discussion on which it was necessary to get a fuller understanding between the Soviets and ourselves. He said it was inevitable that we would have to talk about points of irritation such as Berlin and Laos. However, he felt that if we could get these into some reasonable perspective, then we could proceed to talk about more constructive subjects, such as wider exchange of ideas and people, trade--if there were any real possibilities--reduction of propaganda of mutually irritating nature and the like. As to Camp David, the site of the talks, this was a simple place. There would not be much room except for

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about four people on each side plus interpreters and of course personal service. He pointed out that Camp David was cooler than Washington, a fact which he thought would please the Chairman. Mr. Khrushchev quickly interjected that this was quite right. The President continued; among the subjects of bilateral nature, trade and especially the development of tourist exchanges were of interest, pointing out that we were sending nearly 15,000 tourists to the Soviet Union and receiving only about 100 Soviet citizens.

The President said that if there were any subject that the Chairman wanted to start on today, he invited Mr. Khrushchev to present his views in any way he might like. He wanted to mention only one other point. Before the conference broke up the press would want photographs and a short statement. The talks were personal in nature but perhaps the Foreign Ministers could figure out something which could be said to satisfy the curiosity of the press.

Mr. Khrushchev commented that the Ministers should be given some work to do. He confirmed to the President that he agreed with the program of discussions as he had stated. He wanted to ask only if the President contemplated discussing the disarmament question.

The President replied in the affirmative, adding that he did not exclude any subject from the talks.

Mr. Khrushchev repeated that he was in general agreement with the subjects the President had mentioned. These were the ones on which we needed to exchange and to bring our views closer. He had been commissioned by the Soviet Government to discuss the **widest** matters. The Soviet Government would like to bring about normal relationships between the two countries and the improvement in the international climate which would result from this. Of course he said each country has its own views as to the items to be discussed and the terms of the discussion. He saw no reason why we should not find agreement on many things in the discussions. If so, the discussions could then become negotiations, perhaps at some other spot and some other composition of meetings. The people of the world expected such developments. He spoke the view of the Soviet Government in saying that: "We believe that you do not want war; and we assume that you also believe this about us."

The President interjected that he saw no profit in mutual suicide.

Mr. Khrushchev resumed, saying that he agreed with this statement, but that when the Foreign Ministers met they talked otherwise and that the presence of interpreters did not seem to help. When one side gave its interpretation of a **position**, the other

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side immediately thought that this was what they were saying but suspected that they were thinking otherwise. The main thing, he said, is to establish trust. Probably we cannot take each other's word at this time but we must try to bring about trust. There is no other way. Of course there are differences in our political systems and the whole basis of our social systems is different. These differences must be recognized. If we approach each other in the expectation that the other's system will be overturned, then there will be no basis for understanding. Let us allow history to be the judge of which system is preferable and meanwhile live in peace as good neighbors.

The President said he did not disagree with Mr. Khrushchev's remarks. The question seemed to be - how do we start to clear away the underbrush of confusion and mutual distrust and begin then to solve some of the problems between us. He thought the basis of the mistrust was not suspicion of Mr. Khrushchev toward himself or his suspicion of Mr. Khrushchev. It was a problem of national psychology and popular feeling. He said that frankly, our people are aware of Communist ideology and read its doctrine starting all the way back to Marx, on the destruction of our society, even by force. Our people become uneasy and they say things which are irritating. We have in the US a Communist Party which the people think is militant and is supported by Communists in Moscow. People are thus fearful and tense. Sometimes this feeling even becomes excessive and leads to witch hunts, as in the days of McCarthy (Khrushchev interjected that he read about this). The President resumed, saying that he was sure that we wanted to approach these talks in a friendly way and explore what we could do. He said he was making no charges but explaining the situation. He assumed that Mr. Khrushchev would do the same and we would see if we could find ways to increase confidence and improve the situation, perhaps step by step. So, with the Chairman's permission, he would take up one subject right now, that of Berlin. The United States' position is that we assumed responsibilities at the end of World War II. He agreed with Mr. Khrushchev that the present situation in Berlin is abnormal. However, until the United States can discharge its obligation to the German people, there should be no unilateral action on the part of the Soviets embarrassing to us and making it impossible for us to discharge these responsibilities. We cannot abandon those responsibilities until there is an acceptable settlement.

The President then said that he did not want to monopolize the conversation. So if Mr. Khrushchev wanted to talk, it was certainly his turn to do so.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that the President as the host had the right to regulate the conversation. He had no complaints.

The President said

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The President said if we wanted to make progress, we must discuss specific questions. The Berlin Question was a symbolic one, irritating to the Soviets and unpleasant for us. The Soviets' threat to take unilateral action had brought about a serious crisis. Maybe, though, we would have to put this particular question at the back end of the talks. Some of the subjects which the President would like to discuss were perhaps nuclear testing, some disarmament questions and, he would again repeat, questions of a much greater exchange of books, publications and ideas. He felt that it was important to have exchanges between government leaders. He was glad that the Vice President and his brother, Dr. Milton Eisenhower, had visited the Soviet Union. Similarly he had been pleased with the visits of Messrs. Mikoyan and Kozlov over here. It would be even better if there could be much broader interchanges between everyday people - workers, farmers, and the like. He was also interested in exhibits. He had admired the Soviet exhibit in New York and had been glad to have ours in Moscow. Mr. Khrushchev interrupted at this point to say that as concerns exhibits, he could say in a friendly way that the United States exhibit could have been much better than it was. He did not want to discuss this in detail and thought he could do that later. However, he would like to say why he considered that our exhibit was not really American. The President replied that he had heard some criticisms from some of our people which were considerably more bitter than that voiced by the Chairman.

The President resumed, saying that he could assure Mr. Khrushchev that every word he uttered outside of private meetings such as this would be candidly and accurately reported. He was delighted that the Chairman could tell our people everything he could or wanted to about how he feels as regards the problems that divide us. When Mr. Khrushchev rides with him to Camp David, he will see all the television antennae and will realize that his likeness and every word that he utters is coming into the living rooms of the houses.

The President concluded that there was not much use in trying to discuss these problems in detail this afternoon. We had outlined a number of subjects and the course we would like to follow in approaching them when there was an opportunity for a longer conversation.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that he was quite agreeable to the exchange of views on the subjects mentioned by the President. If he might, he would like to say a few words in general terms about one subject which had been mentioned. He was afraid that American officials, not being Marxists, did not understand Marxism. Coming to the U.S. he had read the Vice President's last speech. The Vice President "was becoming Marxist" and had indicated that he

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was studying the subject but he was afraid the Vice President was not studying very well. (The Vice President interjected he was complimented that Mr. Khrushchev read his speech.) Mr. Khrushchev continued saying that Mr. Nixon had mentioned toothaches in his speech. The speech was not a toothache to him but it was certainly not calculated to reduce tensions and calm feelings on the eve of his visit. On the contrary it would arouse feelings. Mr. Khrushchev was a bit of a politician himself and so he understood the approach. The President had mentioned the subject of mutual reduction of propaganda. Like a hunter following a fresh trail he wanted to mention the Vice President's speech as not being designed to bring about a better atmosphere for his visit. We must all realize that it is impossible to gain the confidence of a people over the heads of its government. If the Americans had no respect for him and the Soviet Government, they could not hope to win over the Soviet people. In fact, "I represent our people." If he could be excused for being frank and outspoken he would say that if ~~he had~~ made such a speech as the Vice President's on the eve of the Vice President's arrival in the USSR, the Vice President would find the situation difficult and the atmosphere tense. After the Vice President's speech, he, Khrushchev, had been surprised to find the people here tolerant and friendly. However, this was probably because they respect the President and respect him as a guest of the President. He had raised this subject only because propaganda had been mentioned. If the Soviets followed the same course it would be difficult to bring about a better atmosphere. If he had read the Vice President's speech before his departure he would have felt compelled to hit back.

The President commented that he must read this speech of the Vice President's about which the Chairman was talking. The Vice President suggested that he also read the speech Mr. Khrushchev had made on the day the Vice President arrived in Moscow and the speech he made while the Vice President was there so that the President could get the record straight on both sides.

Mr. Khrushchev commented that if they were to talk about the Moscow speeches, he would ask the President to be the referee. If at the opening of the American Exhibit he had not spoken before the Vice President, his speech would have been different in content and in length. Even so his speech had not been published in the American press as had the Vice President's. The President turned to Mr. Kohler who reported that Mr. Khrushchev's speech had been given considerable coverage in the American press but confirmed that it had been published in full textually only in the magazine U.S. News and World Report.

Mr. Khrushchev commented that this was not the same thing as the daily press - that they had magazines too in the Soviet Union and he knew what they were.

The President said he

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The President said he wanted to assure Mr. Khrushchev that there was no censorship in the U.S. He also wanted to say that he could not influence the American newspapers. He would not try and could not do so if he did try.

Mr. Khrushchev replied he knew some things about conditions in the U.S. and that he had noted the talk about full freedom of press existing here. He had also noted that what the U.S. Government wants to have published is published and what it does not want to have published is not published. If we were to take that approach the Soviets could, too. It was better to take a reasonable view of the matter and not refer to our respective constitutions. The Soviets were proud of their constitution just as the Americans were. However, he was sorry to pursue this subject. He had taken it up only as an example.

The President said he wanted to make two points. One, he thought we should talk about propaganda objectively but that we should not make propaganda among ourselves. Consequently he would not pursue the question of the debates between the Chairman and the Vice President. The second point was that if Mr. Khrushchev would like to investigate the full freedom of our press, he would invite any editors, ~~reporters~~ or journalists the Chairman might want to see to meet with him. Mr. Khrushchev could be quite alone with them and find out what they say about government control. Again, he would assure Mr. Khrushchev that there was no such control. It would have been very useful to him to have been able to influence the press during the two political campaigns he had waged.

Mr. Khrushchev replied, "I believe you", adding that though this was his first trip to the U.S., he knew something about how things were done here and likewise he read the papers.

The President commented that Mr. Khrushchev would be having a big meeting with the press tomorrow. He had no idea of the questions the Chairman would face but he thought he would find that there was no control over them and practically no limitations to the kind of questions that would be asked. The President himself faced this kind of press questioning once a week.

Mr. Khrushchev commented that he reads the record of the President's press conferences including the questions and answers. He thought he knew what the press was like here. He was prepared to take it as he found it though he would point out that there is a different kind of press in the different kinds of social systems which we have. The President had mentioned the exchange of ideas. He wanted to say that if there were an exchange of speeches and the American speech was published by the Soviets and the Soviet reply was not published by the American press, then perhaps the

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next speech would not be published in the Soviet press. This would result in a "dialogue between deaf persons", with what was published on one side not relating to what was said on the other. He too could say that he did not control the publishers and the press in the Soviet Union - so the conditions were similar.

The President replied that we might consider trading television programs, perhaps one-half hour program on each side every month. An American leader could speak there and a Soviet leader here. While he could not control these things he did know that the American companies would be interested in getting such programs.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that the Soviets have had a bad precedent with the Vice President on the question of television programs, too. During the discussion at the American exhibit which was kinescoped, it had been agreed that there would be a full translation on both sides. However, some American television companies had not translated Mr. Khrushchev's remarks in full. He was not complaining, he was just stating the facts.

The President said that he had seen the pictures and he did not think the Chairman had lost any of his effectiveness.

Mr. Khrushchev again said that though he was not making any great complaints his remarks should have been presented in full.

The President replied that he thought that arrangements could be made in connection with the television programs so that the representatives of each country could check the accuracy of translations and monitor use throughout the other country. Mr. Khrushchev said it was too bad Mr. Georgi Zhukov was not here as he was the Soviet official who knew most about these things. As regards television, he had had Mr. Eric Johnston to his home in the Caucasus. Mr. Johnston had proposed that there be a project for an exchange of filmed speeches of the President and Mr. Khrushchev. The Soviet side had agreed to this but it appeared that the U.S. had dropped the project.

The President said that Mr. Johnston had mentioned this to him only as a proposal but that he had heard no more about it.

Mr. Khrushchev said that he had mentioned the proposal as one instance in which the Soviets had accepted but nothing had come of the project.

The President replied that he would look into this matter and follow through on it. However, he wanted to repeat that if the Soviet monitors find any lack of coverage of Mr. Khrushchev's present visit to the U.S., he would like to hear about it personally.

Mr. Khrushchev thanked

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Mr. Khrushchev thanked the President but said that he did not expect any deficiency in this respect and was sure that he would have no complaints.

The President, changing the subject, said that he would be glad to have any suggestions of the Chairman regarding the arrangements at Camp David or as to any other way in which we might help to make his visit here more pleasant.

Mr. Khrushchev expressed his appreciation, adding that perhaps he had not realized the burden he had undertaken and that he might need some relief or some help.

The President asked whether the Chairman meant that he should perhaps make one of Mr. Khrushchev's speeches in his stead.

Mr. Khrushchev replied that it would probably not be possible for them to change places in that way. Each of them had a certain position where they stood but if they tried to change around, things might get very confused. He went on to say that he recalled that when he was in Great Britain, he had been taken from one city to another at a great pace. He had finally said to Mr. Eden that he had had all he could stand - he now needed some sleep. Mr. Eden had replied that it would be possible to skip an English city but that they could not fail to keep their itinerary in Scotland or Scotland would leave the Empire.

The President resumed, saying that in connection with the arrangements, everything which had been planned had either been suggested or approved by the Soviet representatives. Consequently if Mr. Khrushchev wanted to get more sleep, he would have to decide for himself what to drop.

Mr. Khrushchev said that if the burden was too great, this was probably a result of his desire to see as much as possible in a very short time. He then reverted to the question of exchanges and said that when we discussed this subject, he would like to have Mr. Zhukov along on the Soviet side.

The President replied that Camp David was only 35 minutes away from Washington by helicopter. Any special aide that Mr. Khrushchev might want could be brought up to Camp David on short notice, in addition to those who would remain there. Consequently he would be delighted to have Mr. Zhukov come up. In fact, he would like to invite the Chairman to take a helicopter ride with him now.

Mr. Khrushchev nodded assent but he said that he would first like to say a few words about the President's reference to Marxism and "your

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and "your Communist Party". It was not necessary to discuss this in detail now, but during the later talks he would want to rectify the views which the President had expressed. He had read many speeches by members of Congress alleging that Moscow controls the Communist parties throughout the world. Such allegations are certainly in error. However, he would not go into details now.

The President had also mentioned that he wanted to discuss Berlin and he would also like to say a few words on that subject now. He wanted to make clear that the Soviets had not raised the issue of Berlin as such, but rather the question of the conclusion of a peace treaty in order to terminate the state of war with Germany. Thus the status of West Berlin would also be settled. He too wanted to discuss this question. He would give a sincere exposition of Soviet views and would be glad to hear the President's views. It would be desirable if we could work out common language, recognizing the fact of the existence of two German states, and confirming that neither side would try to bring about either a Socialist or a Capitalist solution by force. If we could make that point clear, then we would remove the danger from the situation. If we were to speak of our sympathies, then we both knew where the sympathies of each other lie. American sympathies lie with West Germany and the system existing there. Soviet sympathies are with East Germany and the system prevailing on that side. It would be well to recognize the facts. That doesn't mean that the United States would accord juridical recognition to the GDR, but would accept the state of fact as it exists. "Believe me," he said, "we would like to come to terms on Germany and thereby on Berlin too. We do not contemplate taking unilateral action, thought on your side you took unilateral action in Japan in which we were deprived of rights we should have had. We had to accept that." However, he continued, that he realized the problems of Germany have been hanging for 14 years. We must find a way out which would not leave an unpleasant residue in our relationship. Rather, we should seek a solution allowing us to revert to the friendly relationship on the subject of Germany we had enjoyed during World War II. The Soviets were prepared to try to find a way out which would not do injury either to United States prestige or to their own. He felt that if we worked hard enough, we could find such a way out. He would repeat to the President a compliment which he had made publicly about him by citing the very high esteem the Soviets had felt for him as an allied leader during the war. Stalin had had the highest opinion of the President's integrity with regard to the USSR during World War II, and the Soviet leadership all share this high regard.

Continuing, Mr. Khrushchev said, "You must recognize that we are Communists, that we and you have different systems. You must recognize that there are these two different worlds. If we ignore these realities, then we cannot come to terms."

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The President, changing the subject, suggested then that in preparing for further talks at Camp David, the respective staffs should take papers and our positions on all these subjects would be discussed. These papers could be put down (on the table) and we could see if we could bring them closer together.

Mr. Khrushchev requested clarification. Did the President mean that the Ministers should try to get agreed documents or summaries of positions?

The President replied negatively, saying that this would not be practicable and cited the long attempts made by the Foreign Ministers to reach agreement at Geneva.

Mr. Khrushchev commented that he felt the Ministers would not be agreed.

The President said no, that he had not had agreed papers in mind but, for example, on Berlin there could be an outline of the respective positions.

Secretary Herter suggested that Mr. Gromyko and he might meet tomorrow and take a little time to agree on the subjects to be discussed. Mr. Khrushchev indicated his agreement with this and the President confirmed that the Foreign Ministers would agree only on the subjects for discussion. The Vice President commented that the Foreign Ministers would agree as to what we disagree on. Mr. Khrushchev terminated the conversation by saying that the Foreign Ministers would try to establish where we disagree. It would then be up to the President and himself to try to agree.

The press representatives were then admitted to the President's office for photographs, after which the President and Mr. Khrushchev had a brief private meeting with the interpreters only and then proceeded to the south lawn with the interpreters and security aides to take a helicopter sight-seeing tour of Washington.

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